



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Fisheries Service Announces New Regulations for Spiny Lobster in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

Small Entity Compliance Guide

On November 17, 2011, NOAA Fisheries Service approved Amendment 10 to the Fishery Management Plan for Spiny Lobster Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. This amendment addresses new requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as well as other management changes. A final rule implementing these regulations published in the *Federal Register* on December 2, 2011 (76 FR 75488) with an effective date of January 3, 2012. The fishery management plan for spiny lobster is jointly managed by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils).

The final rule makes the following changes to the fishery management plan:

- Removes four species of lobster from federal management.
- Establishes an annual catch limit, annual catch target, and accountability measure for Caribbean spiny lobster.
- Revises the protocol for cooperation with Florida and the framework procedure, which allows more timely implementation of routine regulatory changes.
- Requires fishermen with tailing permits to land spiny lobster all whole or all tailed, and requires applicants for a tailing permit to possess either a federal spiny lobster permit or the Florida permits required for commercial lobster fishermen.
- Allows retention of as many as 50 Caribbean spiny lobsters less than the minimum size limit and one per trap. Authorizes the removal of traps in federal waters off Florida through Florida's trap cleanup program.
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In addition, the amendment contains non-regulatory actions that revise thresholds used to determine the status of the stock, such as overfishing (rate of removal is too high) and overfished (population abundance is too low), and establish an acceptable biological catch control rule. The Councils considered alternatives to create new closed areas to protect coral and implement trap line-marking requirements; however, they chose to take no action at this time to allow for additional stakeholder input. Amendment 11 to the FMP is being developed to address these actions.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Electronic copies of the amendment and final rule may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SpinyLobsterAmendment.htm.

For more information on Amendment 10 please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

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